

# Local Wisdom in the Plurality of Religious Life: Lessons from Tenggerese

FX Sri Sadewo

Sociology Department  
Universitas Negeri Surabaya  
Surabaya, Indonesia  
fsadewo@unesa.ac.id

Martinus Legowo

Sociology Department  
Universitas Negeri Surabaya  
Surabaya, Indonesia  
marleg@unesa.ac.id

Artono

History Department  
Universitas Negeri Surabaya  
Surabaya, Indonesia  
artono@unesa.ac.id

Zainuddin Maliki

Law Faculty  
Universitas Muhammadiyah Surabaya  
Surabaya, Indonesia  
zmaliki@yahoo.com

**Abstract**—There is a worrying lesson in the transition of democracy. The transition from one regime to the other regime lead to a change of political constellation. This change will bring religious, ethnic and other issues into political identity. Strengthening political identity in a plural society produces a conflict. To prevent it, in the situations of religious diversity, for example, the maintenance of relations between religious people becomes very important. The value of local culture can effectively develop harmonious relations among religious people. In this situation, the local political elite becomes the keyword for implementing those values. With ethnographic research methods in the Tengger community in four villages in Tosari District from 2012-2015, this study shows that the local culture and ritual values formed the basis of a harmonious diversity of life. By Kasadha and Karo, the community is united and lives in harmony.

**Keyword:** local cultural values, local elites, Kasadha and Karo.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Empathy and tolerance are two attitudes that strengthen a social integration in the globalization era ([1] in Australian case). This is very important to be understood by a multicultural nation, such as Indonesia. In Indonesia, the era of globalization has resulted some changes in political structure and society. The change of political structure is marked by the change of AUTHORITARIAN government to the open democracy. Suharto's inability to withstand an open rate of information resulted a delegitimation and eventually resigned after 32 years in power. This political change resulted some changes in ethnic relations governance. A governance was originally authoritarian. The Suharto government has labeled "SARA" on the issues that interfere with interfaith and ethnic relations. The perpetrator is brought to justice and punished. This changed in the past, has become the public consumption through the internet and social media [2][3]. The records of horizontal conflicts between ethnic and religious followers, especially post-Suharto governments and how the resolution process is recorded by the Center of Humanities Dialogue [4][5].

Empathy and tolerance among these citizens can mitigate the sources of conflict in Indonesia. The decreased of empathy and tolerance affects to the increasing of antipathy toward other groups. In a situation of strong states, antipathy is hidden and becomes a potential latent conflict. A conflict occurs due to the seizure of scarce resources, such as: power and economic resources. The differences in religion and ethnicity seem to imply the trigger [6], [7]. From the analysis of Braithwaite, et.al, Wilson and Sofyan show that ethnic and religious conflict is a product of political and economic struggle [6]. David McRae (2013) specifically addresses the case in Poso about the latent sentiments raised to the surface as decentralization policy sparked by local elite competition in bureaucratic and economic aspects.[8], [9],[10]

Nevertheless, learning from Clifford Geertz (1981) research, local communities have the ability to manage a conflict due to religious and ethnic differences. His research was conducted in the 1960s [11]. In those years, after the 1955's election, Indonesia society, especially Javanese, were divided into political flow [12]. His research showed that Javanese society is united in various rituals of religious and culture one another: through the Independence Day ceremony and *riyaya* ceremony. But, after Suharto era, several social scientist are rethinking about Geertz theory, especially after DKI Governor election 2017[13]. In the other case, after 1965, Tenggerese community was open and accept the other ethnic. Part of Tenggerese converted their religion to another religion. But, they still unified and live in peace and harmony. On this article, we will discuss how parts of Tenggerese cultures as local wisdoms make they live in harmony.

## II. RESEARCH METHODS

This article is generated from several research about Tenggerese life. The research used a qualitative approach. The method of research was ethnography [14]. Data collection techniques used were observations and in-depth interviews. The observations were made during Kasadha and Karo events. Meanwhile, the interviews were conducted on shamans,

religious leaders, local peoples, migrant and tourists. The depth interviews and observations, described the process of migration and social changes, especially in the last ten years. In addition, the researchers also conducted an analysis of local community responses to migrants and their interaction patterns. The traditions of *Kasadha* and *Karo* are also scrutinized to explore who is playing the role and the process.

### III. MIGRATION OF “DOWNLAND” PEOPLE TOWARDS MOUNT TENGGER

#### A. *The Low of Population Growth.*

One of the districts inhabited by the Tenggerese community is Tosari. This district is one of the Pasuruan’s districts around the peaks of Tengger mountain. This place is approximately 40 km from capital city of Pasuruan. The street from the capital city to the villages, Puspoko and Tosari, is quite sideways. It is because the villages are located in the 1000 – 2000 meter above the sea levels.

TABLE I. DEMOGRAPHY OF FOUR VILLAGES IN TOSARI TAHUN 2014[15]

Demography	Villages			
	Tosari	Wonokitri	Ngadiwono	Podokoyo
Area (ha)	550, 93	3.818.24	1.105.82	1.197.20
Dusun	5	2	4	3
Population				
a. Man	1.596	1.450	1.357	938
b. Women	1.605	1.373	1.373	904
c. Total	3.201	2,730	2,730	1.842
Density	580.94	79.05	246.84	153.88

From the top eight villages in Tosari District, there are four villages observed in this research, namely (1) Tosari, (2) Wonokitri, (3) Podokoyo and (4) Ngadiwono village. Compared to other villages, Tosari has the highest population density. In addition, Tosari is the “gate” of Tengger highlands. Several peoples of non-local ethnic came and settled in Tosari. There are *Mataraman Javanese*, *Malangan Javanese* and *Pedalungan*. The *Mataraman Javanese* are from Madiun, Kediri, and Tulungagung, meanwhile *Malangan Javanese* are from The Great Malang and Blitar. But, the *Pedalungan* are a local community that hybrid between Javanese and Madurese culture in early twentieth century.

The growth of the population of these villages is very small, ranging from 0.1% to 1% before the year 2000. From the observations, a family that have more than 2 (two) children is rare, although they married at a young age. After 2000, the growth has increased due to the tourism factors. In 2000, Tosari’s inhabitants was 2.503 peoples and now it grew into 3,186 with the population density of 578.22 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup>. The population was increased slowly after fourteen years later (see table 1).

#### B. *Plantation and Tourism as a Fascinating Attraction*

Post-1970, there were a change of the land use although it is not significant. Initially, the dominance of the agricultural sector was also seen that of 80% land is used. Now, these is a

decreased of the land use up to 10%. In Tosari Village for example, from 550.93 Ha, 419.30 Ha is a dry field land (76.10%), and Podokoyo village is the lowest one that have 1.187.30 Ha area, and the dry field land is 31.17% or 373.20 Ha. In addition to population growth and livelihood changes, topographic factors were the effect of the changes of landfunction, i.e. the land turned into a settlement.

The dry field land (*tegalan*) is actually the main sources of the food. Based on the topography, these villages situated at an altitude of 1500-1800 m dpl. The temperature is about 14<sup>0</sup> -21<sup>0</sup> C and 10<sup>0</sup> C during the dry season. The average yearly rainfall is 2,200 mm to 3,000 mm. The slope of the soil reaches 60 degrees or more. According to these condition, they can develop a dry cultivation system. Their plants are a cabbage, cauliflower, peppers, onions and asparagus. Since they belong to low temperature resistant plants. These plant was introduced in the Dutch colonial era on early 20th century. Its introduction was not intensive. They kept planting a main food corps, such as corn and potatoes. Both of these plants do not require irrigation and survive in the cold air. Meanwhile, in the same period, the villages on the slopes of the Tengger mountains introduced plantation crop, such as coffee and sugar [16]

The intensification of plantations at the end of the 19th century on the lower and middle slopes of the Bromo Mountains resulted the migration of other ethnic groups, particularly Madurese. They do a hybridization of cultural and religious conversion [16], [17]. The arrival of the immigrants at the top of Bromo just happened when the tourism has developed. The tourism development begins in the Tosari and Wonokitri villages because both are located in the main access road to the peak of Tengger mountain (Bromo). In the last four decades, several residents set up a small inn with 5-7 rooms. The in-room amenities are like a hotel, there is a bathroom with shower and bath, and heated with *LPG*. The room rent ranges from 100,000.00 IDR to 150,000.00 IDR, the same as the price of a hotel room. In addition to providing rooms, the homestay owners also sell food and drinks. They cook, from the simplest *boiled noodles (instant noodles)* to fried rice and *soup*. Homestay is a given the name of the business and the owners, then, make a business card. If they have no a big investment, they only make five rooms with a lower price. They also prepared toyota hardtop rental. These cars are a transportation mode to the peak of Bromo.

The presence of people from the lower slopes does not mean the people of Tengger are comfortable. In their knowledge, they distinguish between “upper” and “bottom” people. The “upper” people are the local people of Tengger who live around the summit of Tengger mountain. The “bottom” is the outsiders who come from the lowlands. Political violence in the 1965’s and 1998-2000 was recorded in the memory of the “upper” people. Although it was not very big, they actually have a fear of the presence of the “bottom.” This is the risk of a plural society (see also [18]).

### IV. THE CONVERSION TO OTHER RELIGIONS

The performed conversion by the Wonokitri residents was not a problem for Tenggerese, as it was said by Sulkan, “...” *Please choose a religion or belief, but do not forget the identity*

as wong Tengger (Tenggerese) because of the religion. Or, hostile to you ..." The same thing was said by Moslem informants, Sukatin, " ... converts, though happened in my family, no problem. As long as it does not interfere with the family harmony. Religious affairs are the human affairs with God. "

What happens in Wonokitri, Ngadiwono and Podokoyo, is not much different from Tosari Village. Because it is located on the main road to enter the Bromo area from Pasuruan, Tosari Village is relatively open. From the economic side, the majority of Tosari people work as vegetable farmers (onions, potatoes, and cabbage) (75%), but the others as the traders and teachers. In addition, a number of family opened the inn (*home stay*) and *café*. Moreover, from the economic side, as it is the center of the sub-district, Tosari Village develops a busy market beside the agriculture. Through this market, all agricultural products are from Tosari district and flows to the "down" area to Surabaya. The dynamics of the economic does not necessarily release social ties between them. The businessmen, farmers and first owner traders were usually invite the workers from their own family rather than the outsiders. This economic relationship does not affect the interaction between interfaith or inter ethnic communities. However, they are concerned more about a friction with other ethnic groups, rather than with their own interfaith communities. Sukardi, the informant, said that though different religions, they remain the Tenggerese.

The religious tolerance is very high in this village. In everyday life is not about a division between religious groups. Such detention is disclosed by Sukardi, "On Christmas Day, Christians also invited Muslims and Hindus, on the contrary, too ... When building the mosque, other people also helped by energy and money..." He admitted that he is a religion converter.

"My parents used to be Buddhist religion, including me. But I did not understand the teachings of Buddhist scriptures, the term Budhism on ID card only. Then after I studied the Christian book of the Gospels I felt there was enlightenment and something different from other religions, including Buddhism. Then in 1965 I and my extended family decided to convert to Protestant..."

However, when traced, the conversion of Tenggerese religion in Tosari is more toward Islam than Christian. Religious conversion occurs at the time of post-G30S (1965-1966) (see [16]). Meanwhile, the factor that lead them to be Christians is a marriage between migrants and Tenggerese. Muslim local elites of Tosari, Mohammad Shidiq, said: "... generally Tengger mostly indigenous people embraced Islam and Hinduism..."

#### V. THE MYTHOLOGY AND TRADITION THAT UNITE THE TENGGERESE

The presence of the immigrants and religious convention is in fact still unite the Tenggerese. This is inseparable from the unifying mythology and customs. This notion cannot be separated from the formation of the Tenggerese community. Hefner states that The Tenggerese communities have existed during the Hindu kingdom era [16]. These was cited on

Walandhit Charter (1303 Saka /1381 M). The Charter said that they have a distinctive religious status, i.e. worshipping local gods and spirits on the Bromo mountain [19]. Meanwhile, the study of physical anthropology shows the uniqueness of Tengger community. J. Glinka (1999) classified them into Dayakid or Proto-Malays sub-races, like the native tribes of Kalimantan and Eastern Indonesia [20].

TABLE II. THE MAPPING OF LOCAL ELITES ROLE AND LOCAL WISDOMS ON INTER-RELIGION LIVING AT FOUR VILLAGE OF TOSARI DISTRICT

Characteristic	Condition
Number of Religions by rating	Islam (2) Christian (3) Hinduism
Average Job type by rating	Vegetable peasant and traders
Average Type of education by rating	Most primary and secondary education, only a few graduates and post graduates
Average Moved Religion by rating	Hinduism to Islam Christianity to Islam Islam to Christianity
The main requirement of choosing a leader	Education
Reasons for converting	Terms of marriage and/or God's guidance ( <i>hidayah</i> )
The role of local wisdom in maintaining religious harmony	Tengger's strong customs are the key to strengthening the human relationships in Tosari Sub-district. It can seen from various ceremonies among them including Karo and Kasada which involves all religious people in the Tosari district. In the ceremony was attended also all religious leaders who one of them are inter-religious prayer. A strong culture and Tengger habits cause religious conflicts not to occur. Inter-religious leaders and rural apparatus often hold discussions about the sustainability of the harmony relations between religious communities.
Nature and Potential conflicts	Religious sentiments are more individual. Religious sentiments will arise when asked about the construction of new places of worship. They will rethink for the problem.

The word "Tengger" in mythology is taken from the abbreviation of husband and wife, namely Rara Anteng and Jaka Seger. Rara Anteng was the daughter of The Last King of Majapahit Kingdom. Then, she married to a son of a priest from Widodaren, her name was Joko Seger. Joko Seger is also a senopati of the King of Brawijaya. After marrying Rara Anteng, Joko Seger was appointed to be a leader of Tengger and was named *Purbo Wasesa Mangkurat ing Tengger*. Their place was given an abbreviated name of the couple. Because they do not have children for long year, they meditated. In a meditation (*semedi*), they would be anchored his son at Mount Bromo. Their request followed by the instructions that their last son must be sacrificed. But, they rejected. One day, they run. Their last son was hidden between his brothers. However, Mount Bromo erupted emitting flares are exposed on the child [21]. Since then, to remember that moment, they made *Kasadha* ritual.

In the Kasadha event, the Tenggerese that living around the slopes up to the summit of the Bromo mountain present some agricultural product to the God (*Hong Pukulun*) in the Bromo's crater. Tenggerese community now lived in four regents

(Malang, Pasuruan, Probolinggo, and Lumajang). Prior to present some agricultural product from their land, they chose a *dukun* (a shaman for leading their traditional rituals) by a difficult test process. One of this test are that they utter a mantra beyond memory for hours. They have several mantra for various purposes in everyday life. *Kasadha* ceremony not only connects the two worlds (the spirit world and human), but also chooses the mediator (*dukun*). The *dukun* is not only chosen from the heredity, but also the ability and wisdom in dealing with the life's problems. They are considered as *primus inter pares*.

Not only the *Kasadha* ritual, *Karo* ritual used specifically pray for their ancestors. The spirit of the ancestors was prayed together. Ancestral spirit is not restricted by the boundaries of religion and ethnicity. Therefore, the committee could be headed by the Tenggerese people who are non-Hindu. Their religions are not a problem for Tenggerese. The success of the agenda is much more important than debates about the religions background. Of course, they who are non-Hindus also tolerant. They feel that they have such rituals as part of their culture.

In the rituals of *Kasadha* and *Karo*, all Tenggerese became a single entity. It is different with the tradition of *itself reportedly* (siblings) in Maluku. The people's tradition in Maluku remains divided into two entities, namely the *se'lam* (Islam) village and the *serane* (Christian) village groups. Since both have different religions [22].

## VI. CONCLUSION

Local culture is one of the wisdom that has been established for centuries. This culture has managed to deliver a community from time to time. Culture is the *modus of operandi* for the community to remain sustainable. The community has a local wisdom that solves the problems they faced. One of the problems today is plurality in the religion (and ethnicity). In the case of the Tengger community, *Kasadha* and *Karo* is a local wisdom to remind the community as a whole life. Through *Kasadha*, Tenggerese are reminded that they have an important connection with their ancestor and the nature, namely Mount Bromo. Meanwhile, the *Karo* tradition brings a solidarity among members in a large families and local communities (village). Local elites are aware of the functions of these two rituals as a media of unifying Tengger society. Therefore, they prioritize the sustainability and success of both religious rituals.

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